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CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS: IMPROVED ORGANIZATION OF WORK AND EFFECTIVE USE OF CONFERENCE RESOURCES: CONFERENCE SERVICES AT VIENNA

Note by the Secretariat

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* A/AC.172/150/Add.1.

INTRODUCTION

1. In the first part of its 1993 substantive session, the Committee on Conferences reviewed a report by the Secretariat on the current status of negotiations with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) concerning the establishment of a unified conference service at Vienna administered by the United Nations (A/AC.172/1993/CRP.5). The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it request the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts with a view to reaching agreement with UNIDO concerning the establishment of unified conference services administered by the United Nations and requested the Secretariat to submit to the Committee at its resumed substantive session an extensive background paper reflecting the origins and evolution of, as well as positions taken on, the matter. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request.

I. BACKGROUND

2. In 1984, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), in its report entitled "Common services of United Nations organizations at the Vienna International Centre" (A/39/520), recommended, inter alia, that:

> "The existing UNIDO/United Nations joint conference service should be continued after UNIDO becomes a specialized agency and the present informal cooperative arrangement with some IAEA conference-servicing units should be formalized. Modalities should be determined for pooling other IAEA conference-servicing units into a single VIC conference structure after application of the principles and criteria set forth in paragraphs 86 to 92" (ibid., para. 95, recommendation 5).

In his comments on the JIU report (A/39/520/Add.1), the Secretary-General stated, with reference to the above recommendation, that he had

> "consistently favoured the goal of unifying conference services to achieve maximum efficiency and economy. In the light of its experience in this field and its ability to recruit and retain a large, well-qualified language staff, as exemplified in Geneva, and in view of its mandate to provide the full range of servicing operations for its deliberative bodies, the United Nations is ready to assume the responsibility of providing conference services for all organizations at the Vienna International Centre. The views and guidance of Member States are sought on this question" (ibid., para. 18).

3. In its resolution 39/242 of 18 December 1984, section IV, the General Assembly, having considered the report of JIU and the related comments of the Secretary-General and report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/39/733), concurred with the recommendations and observations of the latter and requested the Secretary-General to submit a further report at the fortieth session setting out his proposals to give effect to those recommendations. In this connection, ACABQ, in paragraph 14 of its report, had supported the idea of a unified conference service at Vienna and

expressed its belief that responsibility for this should be assumed by the United Nations.

4. In addition, the General Assembly, in its resolution 39/68 A of 13 December 1984, on the report of the Committee on Conferences, requested the Secretary-General, "in the interest of maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness, to consider organizing the conference-servicing staff at the Vienna International Centre (VIC) into a single conference-servicing operation" and invited the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "to participate in the consideration of this matter".

5. Consequently, the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its fortieth session revised estimates for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987 to establish unified conference services for the United Nations organizations at the Vienna International Centre (A/C.5/40/7). The object of the proposals was "to pool together conference-servicing resources at VIC into a unified service that would be operated with maximum efficiency and economy as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 39/68 A, and to retain the administrative responsibility for such a service in the United Nations as recommended in General Assembly resolution 39/242 IV" (ibid., para. 13). However, the Secretary-General reported that the Director-General of UNIDO (newly established as a specialized agency) had "expressed his strong reservations about the establishment at this time of a unified conference service under the United Nations" (ibid., para. 5). ACABQ, commenting on the report of the Secretary-General, stated that "in the absence of an agreed approach by the parties involved to the establishment of unified conference services, it appears doubtful that the proposals of the Secretary-General can be implemented as they now stand" (A/40/684, para. 4). Consequently, the Committee, while reaffirming its belief in the idea of unified conference services at Vienna, recommended a draft decision for adoption by the General Assembly on the subject. Subsequently, the General Assembly, at its 19th plenary meeting, on 2 October 1985, adopted the decision 40/405, which reads as follows:

"Unified conference services and other joint services for the United Nations organizations at the Vienna International Centre

"The General Assembly, recalling section IV of its resolution 39/242 of 18 December 1984, and mindful of the desirability of unified conference services and other joint services at Vienna:

"(a) Requests the Secretary-General, on an urgent basis, to resume discussions on unified conference services and other joint services with the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization with a view to resolving outstanding differences in time for a further report to be submitted to the Assembly later at its fortieth session;

"(b) Requests the Secretary-General to communicate to the relevant bodies of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization its concern that no action should be taken by that organization that would

either preclude further discussions by the Secretary-General and the Director-General on unified conference services and other joint services or prejudge the outcome of such discussions."

6. In a subsequent report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session (A/C.5/40/48), the Secretary-General submitted revised estimates for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1986-1987 relating to the conversion of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to specialized agency status. Chapter III of that report dealt with conference services within the resources approved in the biennial budget for 1984-1985. The Secretary-General reported that the Programme and Budget Committee of UNIDO had, on 11 October 1985, adopted a conclusion whereby the Committee had taken note of the decision of the General Assembly and requested the Director-General to continue consultations with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency on conference services as well as other joint services and to report on the outcome of those consultations to the General Conference of UNIDO at the second part of its first session (ibid., para. 42).

7. The consultations requested by the Committee took place at Vienna from 14 to 16 October between senior officials of all three organizations, and reached the following conclusion in respect of conference services:

"(a) There was no agreement concerning the need to proceed at once with the establishment of a unified conference service as proposed by the Secretary-General;

"(b) It was, however, agreed that the conference-servicing requirements and facilities of the Vienna-based organizations be analysed systematically in a comprehensive study to be carried out jointly by IAEA, UNIDO and the United Nations. The study should be completed in time to be submitted to policy-making organs in 1987 so that conclusions could be reflected in the respective 1988-1989 budgets. In the interim the United Nations would continue to provide the translators and supporting staff currently financed in section 29 of the programme budget to UNIDO and UNIDO would operate a joint translation/documents service on behalf of UNIDO and the United Nations;

"(c) It was also agreed to establish a joint UNIDO/United Nations meetings and interpretation service to be operated by the United Nations. The service would consist of the present Meetings Planning Unit in UNIDO, the four interpreters presently assigned to UNIDO and an additional 16 interpreter posts, the establishment of which the United Nations would propose to the General Assembly at its current session;

"(d) IAEA indicated its interest in a common interpreters service" (ibid., para. 43).

8. In the same report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General stated that he continued "to hold the view that a unified conference service, under the responsibility of the United Nations, would be the solution which would provide the maximum efficiency and economy to Member States. However, in the light of the conclusion reached", he recognized "the need to hold in abeyance, pending

the systematic study referred to above, certain of the proposals made in his earlier report (A/C.5/40/7)." The remaining proposals, consistent with the understanding outlined above, made by the Secretary-General were as follows:

(a) The translation and documents service would continue to be provided by UNIDO during the interim period. The United Nations budget (section 29) would provide for 20 Professional posts for translators and 20 General Service posts for typists as well as an amount of about $4 million for temporary assistance. The staff members to whom these resources related would retain their United Nations contracts, but would be administered by UNIDO on a loan basis during the interim period. Their work would not be limited to United Nations materials, but would be integrated with the work of the UNIDO Conference Service, in respect of which a considerable number of established posts appeared in the UNIDO budget. During the interim period, the policy relationship between the Department of Conference Services and UNIDO should remain in effect, and the filling of vacant language posts should be in accordance with existing policies, including the utilization of the examinations rosters of the Department of Conference Services. Since it was anticipated that a proportion of the workload of UNIDO's staff, including supervisory staff, would be related to the work of the United Nations, it had been agreed that the overall costs of the integrated service should be shared on the basis of respective shares of the anticipated overall workload;

(b) The joint United Nations/UNIDO Interpretation and Planning Service, which had been agreed upon during the consultation process, was not to be considered as an interim arrangement. Accordingly, the Secretary-General repeated his earlier proposals to the transfer of four interpreter posts from the UNIDO budget to the United Nations budget and the creation, by conversion from temporary assistance for meetings, of 16 established posts, so as to enable the service to have at its disposal one complete team of interpreters on a full-time basis. Offset against the expenditures incurred for this purpose would be income to be received from UNIDO and other organizations for their share in the utilization of the service.

9. The Secretary-General also reported that the United Nations, UNIDO and IAEA in the course of their informal consultations in early October recognized the desirability of establishing coordination machinery along lines that had earlier been agreed between the organizations and endorsed by JIU in its report on common services at VIC (A/39/520). It was intended to establish, at Vienna, an Advisory Committee for Conference Services, to which would be invited appropriate officials of IAEA, UNIDO and the United Nations. The Committee would serve as a forum for exchanging information and views on any aspect of the management of conference services. It would also consider administrative and budgetary matters and submit recommendations to the managing organizations on policy questions.

10. In accordance with the conclusion of the tripartite consultations referred to above, effective 1 January 1986 the former United Nations conference service in Vienna was reorganized in two separate units jointly servicing the United Nations and UNIDO: a Languages and Documentation Division operated by UNIDO and comprising sections for documents control, editorial control, translation, typing and terminology; and a Meetings Planning and Interpretation Service

managed by the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) and providing meetings planning and servicing and interpretation.

11. In February 1986, upon agreement between the executive heads of the United Nations Office at Vienna, UNIDO and IAEA, a Joint Advisory Committee for Conference Services at the Vienna International Centre was established, inter alia, to undertake the comprehensive study called for in paragraph (b) of the conclusion reached by the three organizations in October 1985 (see para. 7 above). The Committee, composed of senior conference-services and administration officials of the United Nations Office at Vienna, UNIDO and IAEA, met regularly from March 1986 to May 1987 and carried out a systematic analysis of all the areas of activity in the Centre defined as conference services, including documents control, editorial control, translation and typing, reference and terminology, printing and reproduction, documents distribution, meetings planning and servicing and interpretation. It also devoted attention to matters of coordination and cooperation between the three organizations as regards conference-servicing arrangements.

12. The conclusions and recommendations of this Committee were included as an annex to the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-second session on "Unified conference services for the United Nations organizations at the Vienna International Centre" (A/C.5/42/22). The Committee, reviewing experience in 1985 and 1986, concluded that the existing joint United Nations/UNIDO services (Meetings Planning and Interpretation) and UNIDO/United Nations services (Documents Control, Editorial Control, Translation and Typing, Reference and Terminology and Documents Distribution) "generally worked well and served both organizations in a way that was efficient and economical, and that they were preferable to the establishment of separate services" (ibid., annex, para. 4). The representatives of the United Nations Office at Vienna recalled the United Nations position "that unified conference services at the Centre would be in the best interest of all organizations, particularly when considering the long-term effects, and that the United Nations was the best qualified organization to run them". The UNIDO representatives stated that "there were no convincing reasons to change the present set-up of the joint services between the United Nations and UNIDO." The IAEA representatives "were not convinced that unified conference services would be more economical than the current system. In addition, they emphasized the specialized requirements of IAEA in the area of conference services" (ibid., paras. 5, 6, 7.).

13. Consequently, the Committee recommended that "the existing joint services between the United Nations and UNIDO should be continued and any split should be avoided" and that "for the time being the United Nations Office at Vienna and UNIDO be requested to continue operating those functions presently assigned to them". It also recommended that "the arrangements for conference servicing at the Centre should be subject to continuing review by the Committee in order to recommend any changes that may be required, including the possibility of establishing a unified service, in order to make the provision of conference services steadily more efficient and economical" (ibid., paras. 9-11).

14. Informing the General Assembly of the results of the study, the Secretary-General stated that, in his opinion, "a single conference-servicing facility at the Centre would still represent the ideal solution from the standpoint of cost efficiency, and in the light of its experience in that field and its ability to

recruit and retain a large, well-qualified language staff, and in view of its mandate to provide a full range of servicing operations for its deliberative bodies, the United Nations is best qualified to assume the responsibility of providing conference services to all organizations at the Centre". He stated that it had already been pointed out on earlier occasions that "in terms of relative levels of conference-servicing requirements it is anomalous for the United Nations not to be responsible for unified or joint conference services at the Centre" (ibid., para. 16). However, under the circumstances, the Secretary-General proposed that the current arrangements be continued, with the understanding that the three organizations sharing the Centre would keep these matters under review.

15. The matter next came to the attention of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, during consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991. The Secretary-General submitted a separate report on conference services at Vienna (A/C.5/44/24). He reported that during the period 1986-1988, the translation requirements for the United Nations had increased by 37.6 per cent while UNIDO requirements had decreased by 23.6 per cent, and stated that, "following the first several years of experience of the operation of common services at Vienna, including conference services, an in-depth review of such services is needed during the coming biennium". He provided assurance that consultations with UNIDO and other interested parties would naturally take place in that context, with a view to making necessary improvements, and that the General Assembly would be kept informed of the progress of those discussions, which, it was hoped, would produce an agreement that could be reflected in the proposed programme for the biennium 1992-1993. The Secretary-General reiterated his view that "a unified service operated by the United Nations" seemed "best equipped to promote the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources. Since the language and documentation requirements of the United Nations and UNIDO are similar and many substantive matters are dealt with by both organizations, the language staff recruited and trained by the United Nations would be able to meet UNIDO requirements as well, and the United Nations could draw upon its worldwide resources to meet the needs of both organizations at Vienna" (ibid., paras. 23-24).

16. Having considered the report of the Secretary-General, ACABQ stated, in its report on the subject, 1/ that it fully shared the view expressed by the Secretary-General concerning unified conference services at Vienna and believed that the United Nations was best suited to assume that responsibility. Noting that there were deficiencies in the existing arrangements, particularly in clarity and coordination in reporting actual expenditures and preparing budget estimates, the Advisory Committee expressed the belief that the time had come for urgent action and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General "to take early action to reopen consultations with all interested parties on this subject, with a view to arriving at practical arrangements for the establishment of unified conference services at Vienna at the earliest possible date". 2/ Subsequently, the General Assembly, in section VIII of its resolution 44/201 A of 21 December 1989, endorsed "the view of the Secretary-General that a single conference-servicing facility at the Vienna International Centre would represent the ideal solution from the standpoint of cost efficiency and that a unified service operated by the United Nations would be best equipped to promote the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources", and requested the Secretary-General "to take appropriate

measures with a view to expediting consultations with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other interested parties on the subject and to making practical arrangements for the establishment of a unified conference-servicing facility at the Vienna International Centre, as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in paragraph 4 of its report".

17. Accordingly, the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments and other officials of the Secretariat held consultations with their counterparts at the United Nations Office at Vienna, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency during April and May 1990. There was a useful exchange of views, but no conclusive agreements were reached. The Joint Advisory Committee for Conference Services at Vienna, established in February 1986 (see para. 11 above), resumed its meetings early in May 1990 following these discussions in the hope that its findings and recommendations could be presented to the executive heads of the Vienna-based organizations in the first quarter of 1991. This information was conveyed to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General in a report at its forty-fifth session (A/C.5/45/30), in which the Secretary-General expressed the view that, short of a unified conference service for all Vienna-based organizations, "a single unified service provided by the United Nations for itself and UNIDO would provide most of the benefits anticipated from fully unified conference services at the Centre". He suggested that should the General Assembly agree with the conclusions of his report, it might wish to invite the governing bodies of UNIDO and IAEA to consider the establishment of unified conference services at the Vienna International Centre as from the biennium 1992-1993. The Assembly might also wish to request the Secretary-General to formulate specific detailed proposals for such a service to assist the governing bodies of UNIDO and IAEA in considering this question and to request ACABQ to review such proposals at its spring session in 1991 and authorize their submission to the governing bodies of UNIDO and IAEA (ibid., paras. 22-23).

18. In commenting upon the report of the Secretary-General, the ACABQ noted, 3/ that during the visit of the Advisory Committee to the Vienna International Centre in June 1990, representatives of IAEA, had informed the Committee that the Agency was not predisposed in favour of a common conference service, for a variety of reasons, including its view that expectations of economies of scale rarely materialized and that IAEA's current stringent cost controls served its interests well. The Advisory Committee concurred in the proposal to join the two joint services of the United Nations and UNIDO to form a single unified service, it being understood that such concurrence should not prejudice the establishment of a common service in the event that all three parties concerned reached agreement on the matter. In view of the fact that the United Nations was the largest user of conferences, and for the reasons given in the Secretary-General's report, the Advisory Committee expressed its belief that "any unified/common service to be established should be administered by the United Nations, with proportionate reimbursement from the other participant(s)." The Advisory Committee therefore requested the Secretary-General to continue his consultations with UNIDO and IAEA, making clear this position concerning the administration of the service. The Advisory Committee concurred in the approach suggested by the Secretary-General that "specific detailed proposals" for a unified service be submitted to the Advisory Committee at its spring 1991

session and then to the governing bodies of UNIDO and IAEA, and requested that such proposals, inter alia, clearly identify the United Nations as the administering body and provide adequate details concerning the apportionment of costs. Finally, "should no agreement be reached by the Joint Advisory Committee for Conference Services at Vienna on either a common or a unified United Nations/UNIDO service," the Advisory Committee invited the Secretary-General to submit detailed proposals to it concerning a separate United Nations service. 4/

19. During the consideration of the Secretary-General's report by the Fifth Committee, representatives of IAEA and of UNIDO made statements; UNIDO communications were also circulated as documents (A/C.5/45/63 and A/C.5/45/62 respectively). IAEA reiterated the view expressed earlier to ACABQ that it saw no advantages of economy or efficiency to be gained by integrating its services with the existing joint or unified United Nations/UNIDO service. UNIDO estimated that the proposed unification of conference services would require the establishment by the United Nations Office at Vienna of three Professional and 12 General Service posts to establish a minimal personnel and finance infrastructure to administer the language staff taken over from UNIDO and augmented by the conversion of temporary assistance resources to established posts, and would therefore result in increased costs for UNIDO. It proposed that the question be taken up within the framework of tripartite or bilateral consultations.

20. Subsequently, in section VIII of its resolution 45/248 A of 21 December 1990 on the "questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991", the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General and the related comments of UNIDO, and endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ.

21. Consequently, the United Nations resumed its consultations with IAEA and UNIDO in Vienna from 19 to 22 February 1991. A draft paper prepared by the United Nations for submission to ACABQ at its spring session in Vienna was discussed by the Advisory Committee on Conference Services, although representatives of both IAEA and UNIDO stated that the paper had been received too late and lacked sufficiently detailed proposals. However, the representative of IAEA indicated interest in the United Nations proposal for revised arrangements for interpretation, and subsequently agreement was reached between IAEA and the United Nations under which responsibility for the provision of interpretation services for IAEA meetings was to be taken over by the United Nations effective 1 January 1992. ACABQ considered the preliminary report of the Secretary-General on unified conference services at Vienna (A/CN.1/R.1139/Rev.1) at its 1991 spring session; the report was also submitted to the UNIDO Industrial Development Board at its eighth session, from 1 to 5 July. The Board took note of the report, recommended that "any change in the present conference service arrangements for the Vienna-based organizations would need to be examined in the light of the efficiency, economy and quality of services it would bring" and decided "to defer action regarding the unified conference service arrangements for the Vienna-based organizations until the relevant organizations have had the opportunity to study the detailed cost analysis" (IDB.8/Dec.38). In writing to inform the Secretary-General of the action of the Industrial Development Board, the Director-General of UNIDO suggested continuing the review and discussion within the framework of the Advisory Committee on Conference Services in Vienna, "so as to arrive at a

clearer definition of the implications of the various options open to the concerned Organizations". He also repeated his assurance of "the sincere and determined wish of UNIDO to co-operate fully and constructively with the United Nations Secretariat in the search for the best solution to the question of conference services in Vienna in a manner satisfactory to the concerns expressed by our constituency".

22. Although the Vienna Advisory Committee continued its work, no agreement on conference-servicing arrangements at Vienna was reached during 1991. The Secretary-General therefore, in revised estimates under section 32D (Conference and library services, Vienna) for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 (A/C.5/46/30), submitted proposals for separate conference services for the United Nations as requested in section VIII of General Assembly resolution 45/248 A. At the same time, the Secretary-General stated that he remained convinced "that a unified conference-service operation for the United Nations organizations at the Vienna International Centre under the auspices of the United Nations would provide the most effective, and ultimately the least costly, arrangement". He therefore proposed "to continue throughout 1992 to seek UNIDO agreement to participate in a unified conference service administered by the United Nations" (ibid., para. 10).

23. In its sixteenth report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session of 9 December 1991, 5/ ACABQ, having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitting revised estimates for conference and library services, Vienna (A/C.5/46/30 and Add.1 and 2), recommended that the current joint service arrangements continue for the year 1992 and stated its intention to submit to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session detailed observations and recommendations on conference-servicing arrangements at Vienna with due regard to the criteria of efficiency and economy, bearing in mind the contributions of Member States to both the United Nations and UNIDO. The Committee also stated that it would take into account any developments that might result from further consultations among the parties concerned. In the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the initial estimates for conference and library services at Vienna as contained in the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget, with the 1993 portion of the appropriation to be regarded as provisional. The General Assembly approved the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget, as recommended by the Advisory Committee.

24. At its fourth session, in November 1991, the General Conference of UNIDO took note of the exchange of correspondence between the Director-General of UNIDO and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments, endorsed the position reflected in Industrial Development Board decision IDB.8/38, recommended to the General Assembly of the United Nations "that it defer action affecting the status of the joint UNIDO-United Nations conference services until the relevant organizations have had an opportunity to study the detailed cost analysis" and requested the Director-General of UNIDO "to continue consultations with the United Nations Office at Vienna and the International Atomic Energy Agency on the most efficient and cost-effective conference service arrangements at the Vienna International Centre and to report to the Industrial Development Board at its eleventh session on the conclusions of those consultations".

25. The Advisory Committee on Conference Services met during 1992 to consider placing the following items on its agenda: (a) reconciliation of the estimates of UNIDO and the United Nations of the costs of a United Nations proposal for a unified conference service administered by the United Nations Office at Vienna; and (b) cost analysis of the United Nations proposal to establish a separate conference service at Vienna, and the consequent establishment of a separate service for UNIDO. The Committee was unable to agree to take up these matters, and a bilateral UNOV/UNIDO Working Group was established to consider them. The Working Group submitted its report to the Director-General of UNIDO, the Director-General of UNOV and the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Conference Services on 30 July. The findings and recommendations of the Working Group are reflected below:

(a) Estimated costs of a unified service administered by the United Nations. The Working Group failed to reach agreement on the costs of a unified conference service administered by the United Nations. The representatives of the United Nations continued to maintain the validity of estimates contained in the revised estimates under section 32D submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/C.5/46/30), while representatives of UNIDO maintained the validity of the estimates contained in documents A/C.5/45/62 and A/C.5/45/63;

(b) Estimated costs of separate services. The Working Group concluded that the establishment of separate services would require approximately $8.4 million in additional expenditures for the biennium. The areas in which additional expenditures would be incurred were as follows:

(i) Established posts in Language and Documentation. There would be a net increase of 25 Professional and 74 General Service posts. As indicated in paragraph 21 of A/C.5/46/30, the establishment of a separate conference service for the United Nations at Vienna would require the creation of 41 Professional and 81 General Service posts; of these, 38 Professional and 79 General Service posts would be in the Language and Documentation Services previously administered by UNIDO. The Working Group estimated that the establishment of a separate conference service for UNIDO would result in the elimination of 13 Professional and five General Service posts;

(ii) Temporary assistance. The estimated total requirements of the two separate services for temporary assistance were reduced from 26.3 work-years of Professional and 64 work-years of General Service category staff to 11.5 work-years of Professional and 17.25 work years of General Service category staff. For the most part, temporary assistance requirements were a function of workload rather than the manner in which conference services are organized. However, the effect of the establishment of separate services might be to increase marginally the requirements of each organization for temporary assistance, since the practice of sharing the services of temporary staff and prorating costs between the two organizations would be discontinued. UNIDO would have to increase its own budgetary provisions for temporary assistance, since it could no longer rely upon sharing the services of temporary staff recruited against the United Nations budget;

(iii) Administrative support. The administrative staff of the United Nations at Vienna would be increased by one P-3 and seven General Service (Other) posts, as stated in paragraph 31 of document A/C.5/46/30. The Working Group could not agree on the number of General Service posts that UNIDO could abolish as a result of the transfer to UNOV of the administrative responsibility for United Nations staff. UNIDO representatives maintained that only three General Service posts could be abolished instead of the four estimated by UNOV representatives. The net increase in staff for administrative support of the separate services would therefore be one P-3 and three or four General Service posts;

(iv) General operating expenses for additional space. The Working Group estimated that $557,400 in additional expenses would be incurred if the additional conference-servicing staff could not be accommodated within the office space currently available in the Vienna International Centre. No opinion was expressed as to whether additional space would be required;

(v) Equipment. The Working Group observed that the establishment of separate services would require a different configuration for office automation equipment. It noted that in addition to the acquisition of new equipment for the United Nations unit it would be necessary to replace UNIDO's Wang office automation equipment and software but was unable to make an estimate of the costs of such equipment, since both organizations are now initiating a conversion from Wang word processing to networked personal computers using WordPerfect. Equipment costs were therefore not included in the Working Group's estimates of the overall costs of establishing separate services.

26. Towards the end of 1992, the Secretary-General informed ACABQ that no agreement had been reached with UNIDO and that, subject to continuing negotiations with UNIDO concerning the modalities of the establishment of a unified conference service, he intended to report fully on the matter and seek corresponding budgetary provisions in the estimates for the 1994-1995 programme budget. He further stated that, "should formal agreement with UNIDO not be attained at the time of the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, [he] would proceed with plans to establish a separate conference service for the United Nations in 1994-1995" (A/AC.172/1993/CRP.5, para. 2). Early in 1993, UNIDO was informed that the existing agreement which allocates conference service functions on a joint basis would terminate by the end of 1995.

II. DEVELOPMENTS IN 1993

27. Nevertheless, efforts to reach agreement with UNIDO on the establishment of a unified service administered by the United Nations continued. A senior official of the Office of Conference Services at Headquarters visited Vienna early in June for discussions with officials of the United Nations Office at Vienna, UNIDO and IAEA. Following the discussions, the new Director-General of UNIDO wrote to the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management in response to her earlier correspondence and confirmed the agreement

in principle of UNIDO to participate in a unified conference service administered by the United Nations. The exchange of correspondence between the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and the Director-General of UNIDO was brought to the attention of the UNIDO Industrial Development Board at its eleventh session, from 28 June to 2 July.

28. The Industrial Development Board adopted decision IDB.11/27, in which it:

> "(a) Reaffirmed that future arrangements for conference services should ensure efficiency, economy and high quality of services and, with this proviso, agreed to the establishment of a unified conference service under United Nations administration;
>
> "(b) Urged the Director-General to finalize with the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) as soon as possible the arrangements for the transfer of administrative responsibility for conference services from UNIDO to UNOV, with a view to submitting his proposals for final approval at the earliest possible occasion."

29. The secretariats of UNIDO and the United Nations are now proceeding with the preparation of detailed proposals for the transfer of administrative responsibility for language and documentation services from UNIDO to UNOV; these proposals will be submitted to the Industrial Development Board of UNIDO and to the General Assembly of the United Nations, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as soon as possible. The Committee on Conferences will be informed orally of the current status of negotiations with UNIDO when it considers the question of conference services at Vienna at its resumed substantive session.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 7A (A/44/7/Add.1-8), document A/44/7/Add.4.

2/ Ibid., para. 4.

3/ Ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/45/7 and Add.1-14), document A/45/7/Add.6.

4/ Ibid., paras. 10 and 11.

5/ Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 7A (A/46/7/Add.1-16), document A/46/7/Add.15.